



# GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

APRIL 2017 VOLUME 8 ISSUE 4

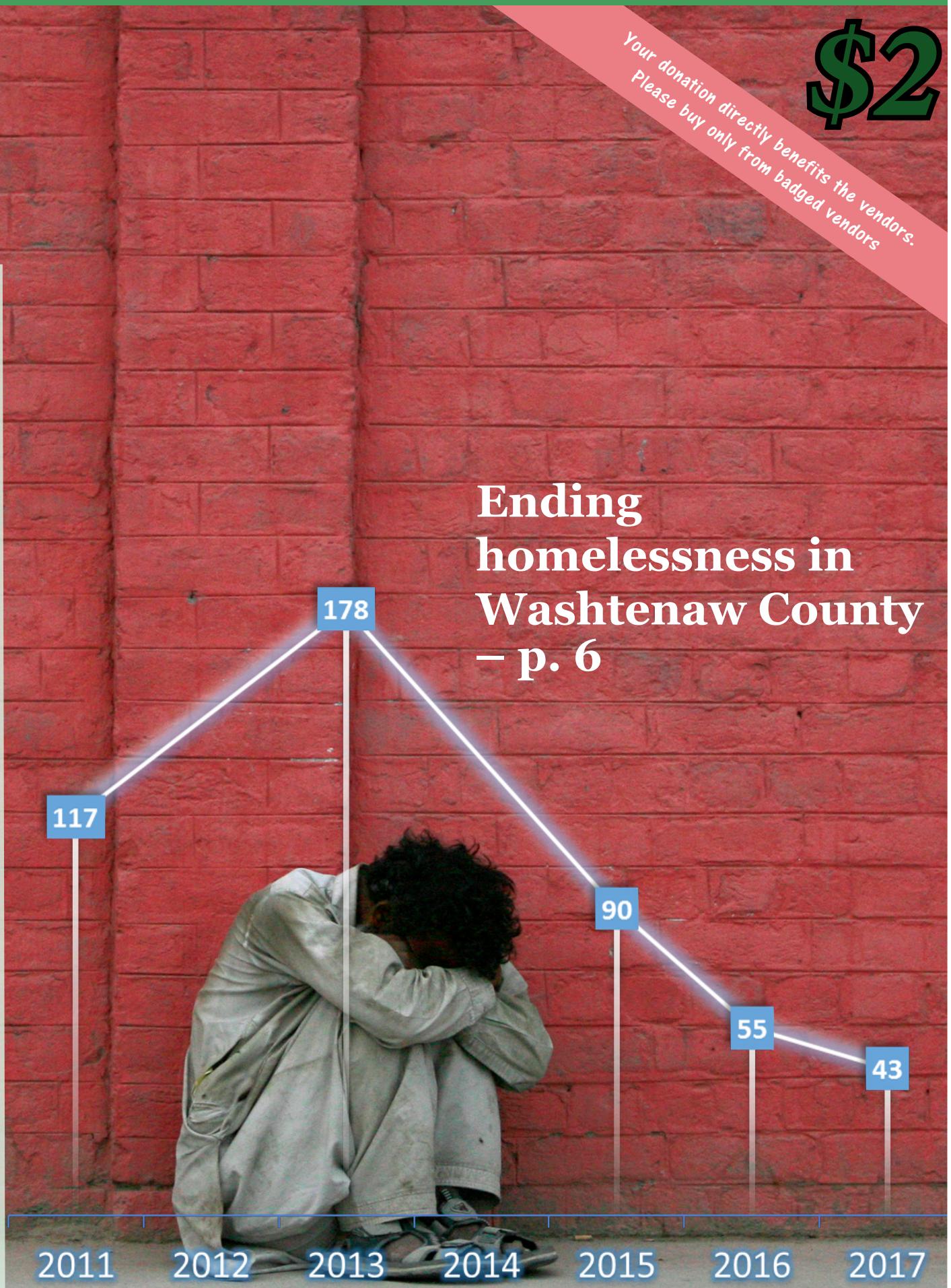
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## Affordable Housing – threats and opportunities



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

Washtenaw County and the State of Michigan have been reducing homelessness at a rate of about five percent per year since homelessness peaked in 2013. Meanwhile the United States as a whole has seen only about a two percent improvement, and even that reduction is primarily in the number of people staying in emergency shelters. Investments in affordable housing by the County and State account for the difference.

The number of homeless people found in Washtenaw County on January 26, 2017, this year's Point in Time (PIT)

count (the number of unhoused people found on a given day in winter) was 300, compared to 343 found at the start of 2016 and 372 found at the start of 2015. Of these people, all but 40 were found in shelters in 2017, compared to 41 found on the streets or in place not meant for human habitation in 2016 and 80 unsheltered people in 2015.

Since its peak in 2013, homelessness in Washtenaw County has fallen by 33 percent. In 2017, all those who had become homeless as a result of domestic violence were housed or sheltered. Only 17 of the unsheltered people had serious mental illnesses, a decline of 80 percent since 2013. Of the 43 chronically homeless people found, only 14 were unsheltered. Veteran homelessness has decreased 24 percent since 2011. Only three unsheltered veterans were found in 2017, a decrease of 80 percent since 2011. Disturbingly, though, one out of five people found homeless during our PIT count is a member of a family with minor children.

Nationally, 47 percent of unhoused people were also unsheltered, compared to our seven-and-a-half percent.

The outlook for the future is bleak on a national level as the president's budget proposes cuts of \$6.3 billion (or 13 percent of the 2016 funding level) to Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The vast majority of funding for affordable housing comes from HUD. More than 200,000 seniors, families, and people with disabilities will be at immediate risk of evictions and homelessness.

At a time when lack of funding means that only one out of four eligible low-income families receives housing assistance, the question should be how to increase support for affordable housing, not how to cut it. For low-income families struggling to climb into the middle class, the loss of affordable housing could mean that family breadwinners cannot get to their jobs or that students miss school.

President Trump proposed eliminating Community Development Block Grants, the HOME Investment Partnerships program, Choice Neighborhoods grants, NeighborWorks America, and the Self-help Homeownership Opportunity Program. His budget would also eliminate the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which coordinates the federal response to homelessness across 19 federal agencies, legal aid services that provide the only resource available to help deeply low-income people avoid unwarranted evictions, and resources to help low-income families heat their homes in winter.

It specifically targets funding cuts for

building maintenance (which is critical for avoiding blight and keeping public housing usable) and community development projects. About \$1.3 billion would be cut from the public housing capital fund and an additional \$600 million would be cut from the Public Housing Operating Fund.

Budgets for public housing authorities – city and state agencies (such as the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Housing Commissions) that provide subsidized housing and vouchers to local residents – would be among the hardest hit. Under the preliminary budget, those operational funds would be reduced by \$600 million, or 13 percent. Funds for big-ticket repairs at public housing facilities would be cut by an additional \$1.3 billion, about 32 percent. That could have major quality-of-life effects on the low-income families who rely on public housing. Tens of billions of dollars in backlogged repairs already plague the country's 1.2 million public housing units, according to a 2010 HUD report. Washtenaw County properties are in comparatively good shape, having made repairing and replacing deteriorating properties a priority in the past five years.

Cuts that would hit hardest here are those to the:

- HOME program (nearly \$10 million), which finances affordable housing;
- Investment Emergency Solutions Grants that are vital for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing;
- Community Development and Block Grant (CDBG), whose \$1,858,189 are used to fund housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization. All of these monies are used, along with the CDBG loan guarantees, to leverage additional funds to the tune of \$20 million for community projects and

programs such as large-scale physical property developments.

Even flat funding for rental assistance programs would be insufficient to sustain existing vouchers because housing costs increase due to factors such as inflation. Yet the Trump budget may compound this problem by reducing funds for rental assistance vouchers, and early estimates indicate that these cuts may take vouchers away from hundreds of thousands of families.

However, since Congress ultimately allocates the funds, these cuts could be forestalled. All members of Congress can be reached by phone through the Congressional switchboard: (202) 224-3121.

In better news for ending homelessness, Governor Snyder's budget for Fiscal Year 2018 increases funding to address homelessness. It calls for increasing the daily reimbursement rate for emergency shelter stays from its current \$12 per day to a new level of \$16 (still below actual costs but a definite improvement). It also designates a \$150 million increase to the Department of Education so it can better serve "at-risk" students.

Locally, County staff are completing the review of proposals for the Platt Rd. development that will include some low-income and workforce housing. The Board of Commissioners is expected to discuss proposals in April or May of 2017.

The Ann Arbor City Council is still evaluating proposals for development of the Downtown Library Lot. The previous Council had committed half of the proceeds from such a sale to the now-depleted Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Councilmembers can be reached emailed at [CityCouncil@a2gov.org](mailto:CityCouncil@a2gov.org).

### TAKE ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

To weigh in on the state emergency shelter increase:	To weigh in on the state at-risk student increase:	To weigh in on both budget items:
Chair, Senate Appropriations: Health and Human Services Subcommittee  Senator Marleau <a href="tel:517-373-2417">517-373-2417</a> <a href="mailto:jimmarleau@senate.michigan.gov">jimmarleau@senate.michigan.gov</a>	Chair of the Senate Appropriations: K-12, School Aid, Education Subcommittee  Senator Hansen <a href="tel:517-373-1635">517-373-1635</a> <a href="mailto:SenGHansen@senate.michigan.gov">SenGHansen@senate.michigan.gov</a>	Sens. Marleau and Hansen + the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee:  Senator Hildenbrand <a href="tel:517-373-1801">517-373-1801</a> <a href="mailto:SenDHildenbrand@senate.michigan.gov">SenDHildenbrand@senate.michigan.gov</a>
Chair of the House Appropriations: Health and Human Services Subcommittee  Representative Canfield <a href="tel:517-373-0476">517-373-0476</a> <a href="mailto:EdwardCanfield@house.mi.gov">EdwardCanfield@house.mi.gov</a>	Chair of the House Appropriations: School Aid and Education Subcommittee  Representative Kelly <a href="tel:517-373-0837">517-373-0837</a> <a href="mailto:TimKelly@house.mi.gov">TimKelly@house.mi.gov</a>	Reps. Canfield and Kelly + the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee:  Representative Cox <a href="tel:517-373-3920">517-373-3920</a> <a href="mailto:LauraCox@house.mi.gov">LauraCox@house.mi.gov</a>

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## Consider the grain and honor who you are



by Rev. Dr. Martha  
Brunell  
Groundcover  
Contributor

Both of my grandfathers were carpenters. I didn't know either one of them. They were alive in other states until I was in junior high or early high school but my childhood family was not into family visits. My sense of larger family came from a random mix of stories. I heard several stories about the carpenter grandfathers.

My paternal grandfather Henry used his carpentry skills to design and make chairs in Gardner, Massachusetts. Back in the day, Gardner's chair factories were a chair-making hub in this country. I don't know if there were other carpenters on that side of the family, but about a decade ago, a friend vacationing in Canada sent me a magazine article that credited a handyman whose last name was Brunell with crafting the first Adirondack chair for a wealthy client just north of New York City. I'm not convinced it is possible to identify who was responsible for the initial home-made Adirondack chair, but I would love to believe it was a Brunell ancestor.

Carpenters and sailors abounded in my maternal grandfather's family.

### Letter to the Editor: EITC

Now that the state House has set aside a plan for yet another enormous tax cut for the super-rich, it's time to talk about real tax relief for Michigan families — restoring the Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Our state's EITC is a shadow of its former self, down from 20 percent of the federal EITC to just six percent.

The EITC enables working people to support themselves and their families. When the state EITC was at its former level, it lifted 22,000 families out of poverty every year. Since it was slashed, the EITC only enables about 6,800 of those families to rise out of poverty. The EITC money families receive is quickly put back into the economy and stimulates economic growth.

Over the last several years, our Republican-led Legislature has systematically cut corporate taxes and shifted the burden onto regular families by cutting the EITC, eliminating the child tax deduction, and slashing the homestead property tax credit while increasing taxes on retirees. In order to fight against the Republicans' destructive policies, I have joined state Reps. Kristy Pagan (D-Canton) and Tom Cochran (D-Mason) in supporting legislation that will restore fairness to our tax system. I have co-sponsored both Pagan's bill, HB 4341, and Cochran's bill, HB 4342, because either of them would represent a significant improvement. HB 4342 would restore the Michigan EITC to 20 percent of the federal EITC, while HB 4341 would go farther and raise the Michigan EITC to 25 percent of the federal level. I call on my fellow legislators to join me in working to pass this critically important legislation. Working people should not have to live in poverty in our state.

Sincerely,

Yousef Rabhi  
State Representative

I've heard the names David, George, and Clem. For more than a century the Clarks were boat builders in Kennebunkport, Maine. Last time I was there, the boathouse still stood, although long before it had been repurposed into a gift shop. Some of the Clarks built large and small Atlantic Ocean boats. Others were ship's carpenters responsible for varied finish-carpentry tasks on board. Just two generations back my family was deep in sawdust.

I have long been a wood lover. I remember my confusion in the early 1960s when my parents joined others in a predominant design choice of that period and covered our home's beautiful old wood floors with wall-to-wall carpeting. When children like me reached adulthood and were living in old houses, we tore up all that carpeting to release the hardwood floors underneath. Friends of mine have boldly repainted old pieces of wooden furniture with bright, contemporary colors but I have never taken a paintbrush to either original woodwork or wooden furniture.

I haven't inherited a single woodworking tool from the extensive earlier Brunell and Clark collections. And an aptitude for and interest in woodworking passed by me in the gene flow. What I sense I do share with all of that carpentry energy, beyond loving wood, is an understanding of what it means

to follow the grain. For the carpenters in the family, a wood's grain mattered greatly, contributing as it did to their artistry of beauty and function. Cuts in the wood were wisely made along — not against — the grain, for cutting with the grain limits splinters and maximizes any wood's strength.

My respect for the grain involves who we are now and who we are becoming as our lives unfold. Do we align with our fundamental grain or do we choose to shape against it in the hopes of being noticed, liked, pleasing, chosen or safe? If we choose to shape against our nature, similar to the carpenter working against rather than with the grain, we are likely to weaken and maybe even splinter what we have to offer, to add to the mix, or to contribute to the common good. Human grains vary widely not unlike ruddy cherry, strong maple, pitchy pine and light or dark walnut. The grain of individual human beings isn't as visually apparent as the different grain of every wood. We are who we are. Tucked inside the particular grain of our person lie gifts, sources of wisdom, commitments, imagination, careful or reckless proceeding, ease or awkwardness, and sources of joy and

sadness — the unique fingerprint of each one.

My Grandfather Brunell designed and made beautiful chairs for homes scattered across the land, wherever Gardner chairs were delivered. His work in accordance with the grain symbolizes the coming home or the secure dwelling that can be ours. Meanwhile Grandpa Clark came from a long line of boat builders, providers of vessels for our journeys. His grain-aligned work embraced the balance between our being settled at home and our endless movement across a lifetime.

Vessels carefully assembled with the grain in mind protect and provide for us when internal or external storms rage with howling winds and rising waters. Our lives in spirit — no matter what, if any, tradition we affiliate with — reflect a continual conversation between being home and being along the way. Both of these conversation partners, dwelling and journeying, benefit when one's human grain is recognized and honored, so that we are ever curious about what our given grain might bring forth for us and, through us, for others.

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# THINK ABOUT IT

## Immigration enforcements through the eyes of children

by Angie Martell  
Groundcover Contributor

For the past few months, I as well as many other people and organizations, such as Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC), Washtenaw Inter-faith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (WICIR), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and local churches and community groups have been volunteering to help undocumented immigrant families navigate how best to protect their families through these very difficult and uncertain times.

The main fear of many undocumented immigrants is who will care for their children if they are deported, especially their children who were born in the United States. Some are creating guardianship agreements in the event that they are deported and their children remain behind. The thought that their family would be divided is heartbreaking and unfathomable. They came to here to create a better life for themselves and their children – escaping poverty, drug cartels, and religious and political persecution.

There are approximately 5.3 million children and youth in the United States with at least one undocumented parent. Over four million of these children and youth are U.S. citizens.

Most undocumented immigrant families have been in the United States for more than two years. Fewer than 14 percent have been here less than five years, while others have been in the here for decades and their children have been born and educated here. They have established roots. They pay taxes, send their kids to school, work hard, own property, and – like all parents – want for their children everything they never had. But they now live in fear and in the shadows, and so do their children.

President Trump's recent executive orders on immigration and the subsequent aggressive raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are creating fear and concern throughout immigrant populations and our nation as a whole. Under current executive orders the offenses considered appropriate for starting removal proceedings can extend to immigrants who stated on employment forms that they can legally work or even enrolled their child in a federal school lunch program.

These policies place a large majority of the 11 million undocumented at immediate risk of deportation. In the past

administration, only those who committed serious and violent crimes were at risk for deportation, but that has now changed. The policies and the rhetoric behind the current policies are creating a schism in our nation and generating an anti-immigrant sentiment. What few people fail to understand is the toll these policies have taken on children.

### Impact on Children

Children suffer from worries, anxiety, and depression due to their parents' undocumented status. They worry whether they will ever see their parents and worry if they, too, will be deported to a country they have never been to or share citizenship with.

Maria (name changed to protect her identity) was nine when she recently witnessed her dad being surrounded by ICE agents just blocks from her school and hauled away. Maria cannot erase the memory of the men in jackets and SUVs surrounding her dad's car, ordering him out and taking him away as she held her five-year-old sister tightly. She doesn't know if she'll ever see her dad again.

Maria's parents have been in the United States for 15 years. Maria and her sister are citizens. The only crime her dad ever committed was having a suspended license. Driving with a suspended license is a misdemeanor in the State of Michigan. Her dad had a Michigan license but could not renew it when the Secretary of State changed their policies. The Secretary of State would not renew her dad's license because he did not have a social security number. While Maria's father could petition for permanent residency through a sibling, the waiting list for Mexican nationals is very long; applications from 1996 are just being processed now.

Maria lives in constant fear that her mother will be deported, too. She worries about whether she, herself, might say something that will harm her family. She no longer participates in after-school activities, her grades have decreased from As to Bs from the stress, she no longer confides in her friends, and she has lost the loving smile everyone admired. Maria shoulders a great burden – too great for a child of nine. For all intents and purposes, she – like many kids who have witnessed ICE activity – suffers from post-traumatic stress.

I recently spoke to M (name changed to protect his identity), who just turned 18. M informed me that many teenag-

ers feel helpless to help their undocumented parents. They also feel isolated, unable to talk about their feelings with their parents for fear that they will add to their parents' worries. Some of those who have turned 18 fear that they may have to become guardians of their siblings if their parents are deported.

The deportation of a parent can have significant and long-lasting harmful effects on a child's well-being. It could leave children and the remaining parent with difficulty accessing conventional health, mental health, early education and social services.

The environment created by the recent changes in immigration policies has also had detrimental effects on our nation's children as a whole. My own children and their peers have also been affected. They have watched the worry on their fellow classmates, or seen their absences from their classes, and they do not understand why this is happening in the land created by immigrants – a land that likely accepted their ancestors from wherever they came from and embraced them as "Americans."

Children also understand (and do not so readily repress) that what happens to one of them could happen to any of them.

Undocumented immigrants as well as permanent residents also live in fear that their children will commit "a crime" that will subject their foreign-born juvenile child to deportation to a country to which they have little connection.

Under President Trump's January 25, 2017 executive order, Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States, any person "having been convicted of any criminal offense, or having been charged with any criminal offense, where the charge has not been resolved" subjects a person to deportation. A marijuana joint, failure

to display a driver's license or pushing another individual can be sufficient grounds for deportation, even if the charge is a misdemeanor.

Under U.S. law, undocumented immigrants are entitled to a hearing before being removed, with an exception called "expedited removals" for immigrants who haven't been in the United States long. Though the law allows immigration agents to use expedited removal for any undocumented adult found within two years of entering the country, the official Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy limited its use to those captured within 14 days of entering the country and within 100 miles of the border – which, in the case of the State of Michigan, surrounded by the Great Lakes which also border Canada, is the entire state. It essentially means that anyone here who cannot demonstrate that they have been in the country for two years is potentially subject to expedited removal.

The times we live in are indeed troubling. The costs to society of the mental health problems borne by children of undocumented immigrants will soar under the Trump administration's proposed policies.

What can you do? If you know a child or a family going through this situation, be there for them, especially if the children trust you. If you see something, say something.

We are a nation of immigrants. Our country owes its physical and human infrastructure, from our railroads to the food we eat, to the labor of millions of people from all over the world who came to our shores. They came without papers and were integral to our country's social, economic and academic development. To restrict or block these pathways now harms who we are as a nation and our country's future.

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## What were you thinking?

by Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Groundcover Vendor #159

Writing an article about my support for Donald Trump has garnered some interesting responses. "Why?" is the most common. But also real engagement with people who had legitimate questions about my choice with whom I was happy to converse.

So far, I've been invited out for coffee and lunch with people wanting to pick my brain. I have admittedly gotten some angry stares and folks shutting me down when I informed them of the topic of my article. However, most people have been tolerant, willing to understand my choice.

But one common denominator is that many people who are puzzled by my choice have not experienced life as I have for the past five years. Most have remained in their comfortable middle-

class homes getting only a virtual view of the world from mainstream media. It seems indeed that they are often perhaps the most angry and upset and it reminds me of the powerful influence the media has to shape our world and remove our personal responsibility for fact-finding; how opinions and feelings can be formed from a 30-minute newscast, in carefully constructed media images.

But this experience has led me to work even harder to practice responsible journalism. To be careful that my information diet includes well-rounded choices and that I balance both mainstream and other sources with a good dose of common sense.

Making the descent from middle class to street life has broadened my view so that what I see encompasses much more than the average citizen. So if anyone asks me what I was thinking,

I will let them know that it was for the welfare of myself and the thousands of others who feel trapped on the streets of America wondering who will understand and pay attention to our plight.

I was thinking about how I have witnessed the realities of the 2014 UNICEF Children of the Recession report, which reveals that "in the richest nation in the world, one in three children live in poverty," where poverty is defined as family income of less than 60 percent of the median income. In 2008, that was about \$31,000. A *Washington Post* article on the subject dares the reader to "let that sink in." I was thinking about how futile it seems my efforts have been to rescue the children I have encountered while living on the streets.

I was thinking about a rarely heard sentiment in mainstream media of how we, the homeless, are overlooked not only by the masses who pass us on the

streets daily, but by our own government. I was thinking about Denise Scott, the homeless woman who used her body to shield the vandalized Trump star and expressed the view that we are utterly forgotten, and how she got physically and verbally berated for doing so.

Perhaps no one heard in the media the things that I did. Perhaps they weren't listening. But I heard and that is what made the difference. For me it was time for a change. To have hope that someone in the White House who might champion the cause of the street person. To follow the brave display of Denise Scott to defend my individual choice to make a decision that reflects my hard-earned opinion.

You can check out more of my opinions about the homeless crisis on my YouTube channel. Type in "Elizabeth Kurtz" – it's the one with the globe.

## My social media endeavor

by Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Groundcover Vendor #159

It's been some time in the making but my YouTube Channel, entitled *As the Third World in North America Turns* has launched. The miracle of the Community Television Network studios and its wonderful staff in Ann Arbor has been a tremendous force in helping it get off the ground. The channel features the programs of "Lit's Talk!" and "The Homeless Teacher." On Lit's Talk! I get an opportunity to flesh out some of my ideas and perspectives on stories in the news regarding the homeless community.

Secondly, there is the Homeless Teacher. She is a potentially wizened, no-nonsense educator forced to give her views on education from a street alley that she has imagined as her classroom. She is a former school teacher who has fallen through all the social safety nets and is now trying to survive and sell her educational wares on the street. I am so grateful that she is a fictional character and not my reality, although I am reminded everyday that she is who I could on any day become.

When I was in college and friends used to suggest that I do a one-woman show, I was somewhat confused. Now I get it – and using social media to discuss the issues of homelessness makes it more rewarding. Having done only serious drama when I attended Eastern Michigan University, comedy was a new challenge but I loved working to bring this character to life and am hoping to introduce more characters soon.

A couple of years back, Groundcover's Publisher, Susan Beckett, invited me to attend a powerful performance where I witnessed a very talented woman bring characters to life. Her show revealed some real social justice issues and greatly influenced my work on this channel.

In addition to YouTube, I have a Facebook page that allows me to share my views using a 21<sup>st</sup>-century bent. It comes with advantages and peculiarities and there is seldom a dull moment. In spite of myself, I find days where I am enraged, comforted or succumb to tears from comments I receive.

The first comment on my Facebook page accused it of being a BS anti-immigrant Trojan Trump page. I knew immediately that it wasn't referring to my Bachelor of Science degree. And I was given more than one other opportunity to note the difference in how BS was being applied. I'm sure I haven't heard the last. It was so far from what I was expecting that I couldn't help but almost respond in kind, which I find is the wrong thing to do. I'm trying to commit myself to never go down to the level of a troll, but remain constant to the message of my mission.

It is not about winning an argument, but making others aware of varying perspectives or engaging with people who might share similar sentiments. I certainly don't agree with everyone who posts on my page – some are much too extreme. This page also hopefully will bring awareness of ideas that are often hidden in the mainstream media. For

example, there is a very real sentiment among many homeless citizens that we have been neglected in favor of immigration reform – a very real sentiment that is rarely touched upon in mainstream news media.

So I sincerely hope you will check me out on social media and feel free to engage on a constructive level that furthers the conversation about the homelessness crisis. I plan to come back

and keep you updated on my progress as I move forward into this challenging and often unpredictable space called social media.

You can find me on YouTube by typing in "Elizabeth Kurtz." It's the profile with the globe.

All shows are also aired on Ann Arbor's Public Access Channel 17 at varying times.



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# AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

## Washtenaw Housing Alliance – coordinating the end of homelessness

by Susan Beckett

Did you know that for nearly 13 years Washtenaw County has had a strategic plan to end homelessness and an organization charged with implementing that plan? The Washtenaw Housing Alliance ("the Alliance") is a broad-based coalition of nonprofit and public organizations serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Alliance members work together toward the common vision of ending homelessness in Washtenaw County. The Alliance is responsible for developing and implementing the community's comprehensive plan to end homelessness, the Blueprint to End Homelessness ("the Blueprint").

The Blueprint identifies objectives. The Alliance board, staff and partners facilitate community collaborations and initiatives to achieve those objectives. The partners, who also comprise the Alliance's Operations Committee, include many of the agencies you have come to know and love, such as the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN at Alpha House), Salvation Army, SOS, the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (Delonis), Ozone House, Safe House, Michigan Ability Partners (MAP), MISSION, Avalon, Catholic Social Services, the Child Care Network, the Religious Coalition for Affordable Housing, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Housing Commissions, Veterans Administration and Washtenaw

County Community and Mental Health Department. (See [www.whalliance.org/operations-committee](http://www.whalliance.org/operations-committee) for a complete list.) Agencies that apply, meet certain operating standards and receive board approval may join the Alliance.

The Alliance is a non-profit itself, funded primarily through Operations Committee dues, donations and grants. Nearly half of its board members helped draft that initial Blueprint back in 2004 and half worked on its update in 2011. The organization is run by an executive director, Amanda Carlyle, with the approval and support of the Operations Committee. Local law enforcement units, city governments, and a few at-large members of the community join the Alliance director and the Operations Committee in bi-monthly Continuum of Care (COC) meetings. The COC, which operates under the auspices of OCED, is responsible for directing state and federal community development funds. The Alliance helps member agencies prepare their applications for these funds. There are open COC all-membership informational meetings at least two times per year that anyone can attend.

The Alliance works hand-in-hand with the OCED. The OCED (a County government unit that spearheads economic and community well-being) is primarily responsible for collecting and analyzing data, and the Alliance is primarily responsible for advocacy, training, technical assistance, liaising with landlords, fundraising, providing a collective voice

and a platform for networking and collaboration for its members, and acting as a clearinghouse for information about homelessness.

The Alliance played a large role in fundraising for the Sr. Yvonne Gellise Fund for Permanent Supportive Housing Services endowment, which provides a sustainable revenue source for support services for certain subsidized housing tenants. Support service providers, including Avalon and MAP, are expected to receive \$50,000 from the fund proceeds this year; fundraising work continues to reach the fund goal of five million dollars. The Alliance also coordinates federal grant applications and establishes the required community outcome benchmarks that brought five million dollars to the COC in 2016.

The Point in Time Count (the number of unhoused people found on a given day in winter) is a collaboration between the Alliance, OCED and Community Mental Health Outreach (PORT). As new initiatives arise, the Alliance often takes the lead until the OCED has the capacity to take on a larger role. A recent example was the Zero:2016 campaign to end Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 – as called for by President Obama – and to end chronic homelessness by the end of 2016. OCED personnel were at capacity so the Alliance started the program itself. Eventually, OCED assumed the dominant

role on the data collection, analysis and presentation side of the project.

Significant progress was made toward both Zero:2016 goals, with the caveat that homelessness in a community is never over. Disruptive circumstances will always result in some people becoming homeless, so the community needs the capacity to house those people quickly – within 90 days is the benchmark for success. Once the community can accomplish that, it has virtually succeeded in ending homelessness by achieving "functional zero," a level at which newly homeless people will quickly get re-housed.

Functional zero was nearly achieved for chronic homelessness by mid-2016 but then the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) stopped issuing new vouchers for subsidized rentals and the list grew again, with 41 people on it by the end of the year. There were only three unsheltered veterans found in this year's Point in Time (PIT) count and the average time it took a veteran to get housed was 108

see HOUSING, page 7



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Easter Sunday Worship, April 16  
6:30, 8:00, 9:30, 10:00 & 11:00 a.m.



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**"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."**  
(Mt 5:5)

**MASS SCHEDULE**

**Thursday, April 6**  
Communal Penance Service

**Holy Thursdays, April 13**  
Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 11 p.m.

**Good Friday April 14**  
The Cross in the City 12:00 p.m.  
Veneration of the Cross 1:30 p.m.  
Evening Prayer/Tenebrae 7:00 p.m.

**Holy Saturday, April 15**  
Blessing of Food 12:00 p.m.  
Easter Vigil 8:30 p.m.

**Easter Sunday, April 16**  
Masses at 8 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m.

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**Help Us Help Kids**

**#KidsNeedKiwanis**

# POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS

## Washtenaw Housing Alliance – coordinating the end of homelessness

continued from page 6

days, a bit more than the 90-day goal.

Attention is now turning to achieving functional zero for families. Processes are in place as a result of the Zero:2016 project, and the County has achieved functional zero for chronically homeless families. The new project, Built for Zero, grew out of the Zero:2016 campaign and aims to keep all families and individuals from experiencing homelessness for more than 90 days. The Built for Zero campaign informs many of the Alliance's current priorities, with the goal of reaching a functional zero level of homelessness across Washtenaw County.

When community members met to attack homelessness in the mid-1990s, they came up with a three-phased plan that called for expanding emergency shelter services (accomplished with the opening of IHN at Alpha House in 2001), constructing a single setting to consolidate homelessness services (accomplished in 2003 with the opening of the Robert J. Delonis Center), and creating and implementing a comprehensive 10-year plan to end homelessness (the Blueprint which was adopted in 2004). The Alliance played a large role in raising the eight million dollars for the Delonis Center and convincing St. Joseph Mercy Health System to allow the IHN to house Alpha House in their unused building on Jackson Rd.

Blueprint goals – homelessness prevention, reforming the system of care, and

community engagement – were accomplished or well on their way by 2006. The Great Recession halted progress and the Blueprint was updated in 2011 in light of the changed conditions.

A subsequent 2014 review, which has yet to be incorporated into a new Blueprint, calls for an increase in permanent affordable hous-

ing, as only 350 of the 500 units called for had been obtained. There was also an emphasis on prevention services to keep people from becoming homeless in the first place or losing their housing once they got it. The need for a streamlined housing and shelter application process led to the Alliance creating Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) in 2011. It provides a common application for both emergency shelter or assistance and housing that draws of the resources of all member agencies. (The Public Housing Authorities participate on a limited basis with only their supportive housing units and maintain wait lists of their own for the rest of the units.) HAWC can be

### Chronically Homeless

We counted **63%**

fewer chronically homeless persons than in 2011

Chronic homelessness is declining at **twice the rate** of total homelessness



*Chronically homeless individuals in Washtenaw County*

accessed by phone or in person at the Salvation Army.

The Alliance also helps member agencies adapt to initiatives and funding priorities from the federal government. In recent years, that has meant less emphasis on shelters and more on getting and keeping people housed. They

produced a Rapid Re-Housing Training seminar to help agencies with the shift. In light of President Trump's recently announced budget, priorities may dramatically shift again and the Alliance will be there to help its members with technical training on best practices in homeless service delivery.

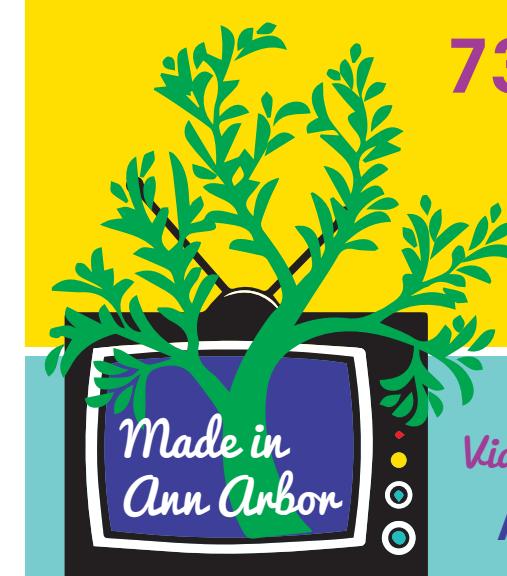


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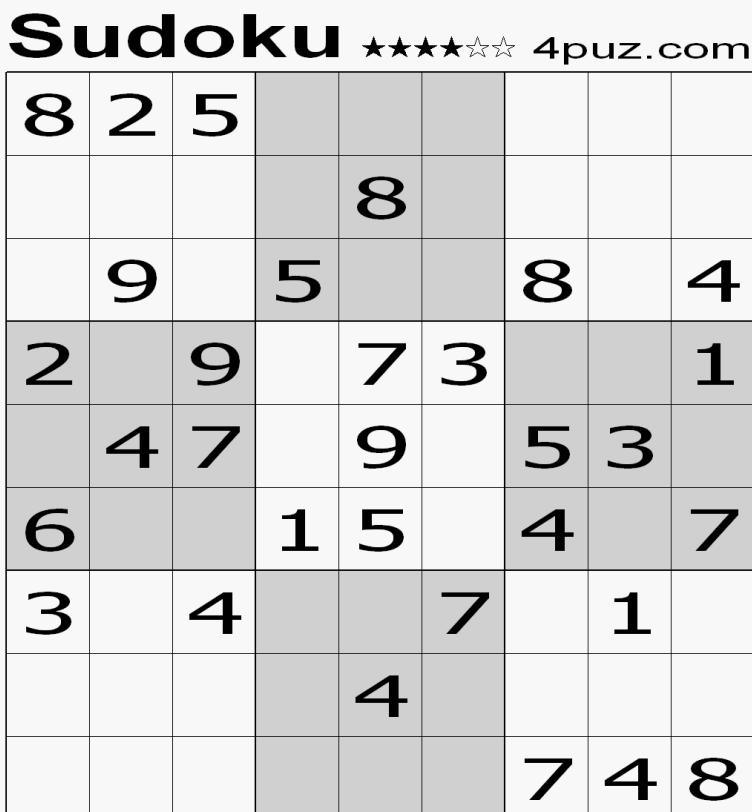
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# PUZZLES



Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.



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While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

**All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:**

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$2, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
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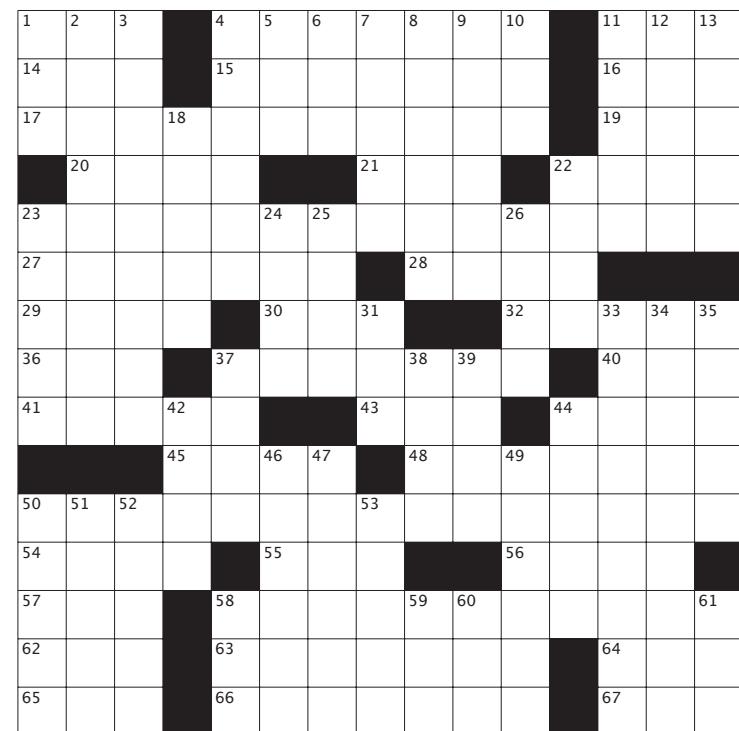
**Kid Lit** Peter A. Collins

### ACROSS

1. Often rejected food additive: Abbr.
4. Traveler's aid
11. Accomplished
14. It makes ink pink
15. Closet relative
16. Words from one forming a 51-Down
17. Boy of fiction, 1865
19. The \_\_\_ Affair
20. Short pencil
21. Prefix for classical
22. Noxious
23. Boy of fiction, 1951
27. Poor rating
28. Remove, in a way
29. One-named electronic music artist (whose middle name is Melville)
30. Part of a moving experience?
32. 1936 Olympics star
36. Lincoln-to-Madison dir.
37. Boy of fiction, 1843
40. Republicans, briefly
41. Feel
43. Brain scan: abbr.
44. Florida vacation locale, for short
45. To boot
48. It might give you a lift
50. Boy of fiction, 1885
54. Years in Yucatan
55. Raiders' org.
56. One of two for Santa
57. Malign, slangily
58. Boy of fiction, 1997
62. Scribble (down)
63. James Bond, schoolwise
64. Big 12 sch.
65. Networking connections
66. Flat people?
67. Dol. parts

### DOWN

1. Dashboard letters
2. Binge watcher's starting point



© Peter A. Collins (Published via Across Lite)

3. Title bear of '60s TV
4. Carpenter's joint
5. Bobby of NHL fame
6. Incredulous question
7. Summer of music?
8. Wire for sound, slangily
9. Iris part
10. Part of MPG
11. Gray area?
12. Pastoral poem
13. Nodded off
18. Having a head
22. Corner office amenity
23. Great Lakes acronym
24. "Avatar" people
25. Ocean Spray prefix
26. Out of
31. "Science Guy" Bill
33. Big-headed
34. A blowout
35. Act like a salmon
37. Poker player's bane
38. Yukon, for one: Abbr.
39. Composer Stravinsky
42. Macy's competitor
44. Prove appropriate for
46. Tranquillize
47. Shakespearean King
49. Construction markers
50. Mecca-bound pilgrim
51. See 16-Across
52. Part of a profit calculation
53. \_\_\_ living
58. Agitated, with "up"
59. Yang's partner
60. First Lady after Lady Bird
61. Volgograd's land: Abbr.



**Bethlehem United Church of Christ**  
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*Bethlehem Church is the home of the Groundcover office*

**Sunday Worship Times**  
8:30 am and 10:00 am, Sunday school at 10:15 am  
Fellowship Hour follows each service

### APRIL EVENTS, 2017

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| April 6     | Lenten Organ Meditation in the Sanctuary<br>1:00 p.m. All are welcome. Stop in to pray, meditate, enjoy.                                     |
| April 8     | German Pretzel Sales, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.<br>\$1 each or \$10 dozen. Call to place your order   |
| April 9     | PALM SUNDAY services at 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. followed by a Potluck Brunch, Egg Decorating, and Easter Cookie Fundraiser                       |
| April 13-14 | MEDITATION LABYRINTH - Our Meditation Labyrinth will be open to the public 9-3 on April 13-14 & Easter morning. Welcome!                     |
| April 13    | Maundy Thursday Service, 7 p.m., in the Gallery  |
| April 14    | Good Friday Services 12 p.m. and 7 p.m.  |
| April 16    | EASTER SUNDAY<br>7:15 a.m. Sunrise Service at Bethlehem Cemetery (2801 Jackson Ave.)<br>10:00 a.m. Easter Worship in the Bethlehem Sanctuary |
| April 17    | Church office closed   |
| April 28    | German Pretzel Sales, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.<br>\$1 each or \$10 dozen. Call to place your order.  |

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## Boober Tours expands through positivity

by Kevin Spangler  
Groundcover Vendor #307

Everything is coming into focus. I have been meditating every day and only focusing on the positive. When you master focusing on the positive you create a better reality for yourself.

Amazing things are happening with Boober. I have been working diligently on Boober Tours, and when you work every day towards something you can achieve something remarkable. Through my hard work I have been expanding. I am now up to nine cabs with another four coming soon.

Boober Tours' main focus is a ride share app that will generate enough business for 31 pedicabs by August. We are also building a framework for advertising businesses, focusing on outdoor advertising and in-app advertising. I also want to teach the entire world's population how to improve themselves by five to 10 percent.

My goals are to operate in Ypsilanti, Saline, and Dexter, as well as my current base in Ann Arbor. I met with an investor and went through my pitch – I have four different investment opportunities. At the end of the pitch she said, "I want to just donate this money to you." She donated half of what the app



Boober Tours pedicab owner, Kevin Spangler, uses meditation and deep breathing to help him focus and achieve his goals. Photo by Peter Beyer.

I am contracting for will cost. I am so grateful.

Sometimes I encounter obstacles but my outlook on obstacles is different. I look at obstacles as a positive sign that you are doing good and the negative energy is trying to knock you off the tracks. But the more you stay positive through the negative energies, the weaker they get and the stronger you become. So I look at them as signs that

I really am on the right track.

We all know the difference between good and bad decisions. The more good decisions you make, the better your life will be. If you always are only trying to survive on decisions to take advantage of someone in the short term, your short-term advantage actions will not bring you long-term success. Becoming more selfless and focusing on what you can do for the people around you will

make your life more positive.

I always look to raise the vibration, and the Wim Hof Method is one of the best ways I have found. I found this method because I got sick – and now I never get sick. I attribute the sickness to over-working and stress. This method makes complete sense because getting extra oxygen to the brain counteracts anxiety, depression and negative thoughts. The act of doing this method raises the pH in your body, which helps you fight off viruses.

The Wim Hof Method: take 25 heavy breaths in and out on the last breath blow all your air out and hold it out for as long as you can then take a huge breath in and hold it as long as you can. That's one round. You might feel a little light-headed. Start with one round, and after a two-week period, work your way up to five rounds, twice a day. I suggest having a way to keep track of your progress.

If you want to take control of your life, this is one of the best ways I have encountered. I challenge you to do the two-week Wim Hof Method breathing plan. People will start noticing changes in you and ask you what you are doing. Get the word out and share with as many people as possible!

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## Homelessness: its meaning

by Cindy P.

*Groundcover Vendor #181*

**Homeless people black and white  
Over the world day and night.  
Move around from town to town.  
Eventually settling themselves down!  
Leaving behind, the street life in the past,  
Ending their misery, oh what a task.  
Securing a future, for the best,  
Never ever looking back.  
Encouraged by others for a fact  
So they can achieve, something new,  
So please help them, please will you?**

## Heliotrope

by Karen L. Totten  
Groundcover Contributor

*For Carolyn Petersen*

To the west of neglect  
is the evening light—  
throat of the sun  
pivots and turns away.

A sunflower follows  
with its nodding head,  
the day's progress into night.

There are woods behind my fence to the east,  
a whole kingdom of trees  
full of mysteries,  
hidden castles, holy grails.

I keep writing it all down.

I keep thinking, even in the pitch  
of darkest hours are hints of light.

My friend reminds me,  
we find what we go looking for: shadow, halo.  
She says, this is a place of many people trying.

## Around us, the clamor grew

by Karen L. Totten

Groundcover Contributor

*"Silence is a cave that provides no shelter." – Elizabeth Renzetti*

And I asked,  
who will address such great need,  
who will give milk and solace?  
Sorrow from history,  
sorrow in the body, and I was afraid.  
But the answers were ours.  
And as if into the limbs of a generous tree  
the children climbed, tentative,  
held as Athena might shoulder their narrow bodies  
or Joan waist deep in the river,  
then set upon the banks of long, soft grass.  
Those who lived in fear,  
those who saw too much,  
or too terrified to even look,  
the ones who kept very, very still,  
the immobile, the good girls, the chastened,  
those who hoped for,  
and the ones who stopped praying,  
too young to comprehend,  
all the lost, lonely,  
ignored, and forgotten,  
or disappeared.  
Those who promised to remain silent,  
quiet all these years—  
their stories finally told.  
And they will rise like a wave of birds,  
the phoenix and all her kin—rise with many voices,  
above the fog, flames  
burning back the darkened hours.

## Poem Lite

by Karen L. Totten  
Groundcover Contributor

Just once, I'd like to write a wise-acre, knee slapping, bone-funny poem, but I was born to play the straight man.  
I can't tell a joke, especially when trying, not even Tim's favorite about the Zen master and the hot dog vendor.  
Have you heard it? The Zen master says "make me one with everything."  
I admit, I'm not the Marx Brothers Night at the Opera of Free Verse.  
  
I am guilty of too many thoughts, of ennui, of long rainy afternoons, whole weeks of pensive longing.  
I'm a country of sorrows, though I did not realize until now my heart has been taken prisoner in that secret stony dungeon.  
So, instead, here's to glazed jelly donuts, and laughing so hard milk comes out of my nose.  
  
Here's to parties and dancing like rock lobsters, down, down, until we drop,  
to shrugging off the solid punches of life,  
to being like light—effortless, invisible and everywhere at once.  
Here is skipping through the grass—when was the last time?  
And the sweet taste of your kiss in the afternoon.  
To my long ago 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Mrs. McCoy:  
you can't make me believe, not for anything, that it's wrong to be happy, even if the joy mysteriously comes upon you during math class and has to be shared with friends, by letter, immediately.  
I will write it a thousand times over on the chalkboards of the sky.  
  
Here is my light of heart poem—not levity, exactly, but a knock, knock on the dungeon door.

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Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95

## Latching on to others

As told to La Shawn Courtwright  
Groundover Vendor #56

I started out just following a group of homeless people who had tents, who were from a nearby state. This one couple were eccentrics who were a phlebotomist and a chemical research engineer. They would have me come to their tent and we all would smoke crack and meth. They were weird, but really generous. The phlebotomist stuck me with a needle out of the blue and drew my blood, and I didn't even feel it. That was pretty far out; I went back to doing other things to eat and have a place to crash every night.



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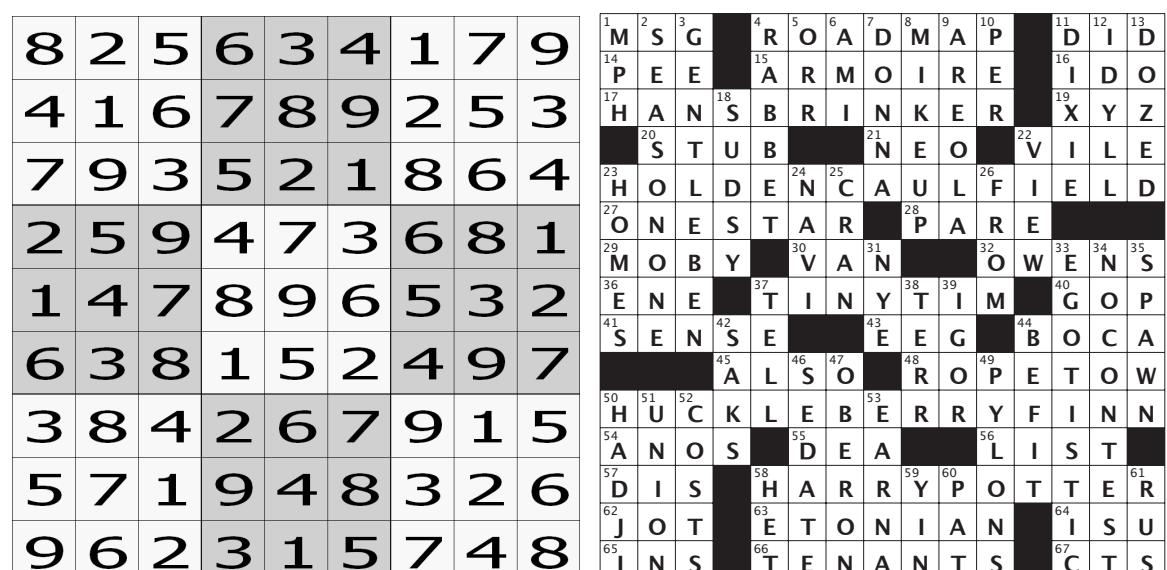
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—MICAH 6:8

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## Mushroom and pearl barley sauté

by Elizabeth Bauman  
Groundcover Contributor

A wonderful complement to grilled or smoked chicken.

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup barley
- 1 pound button mushrooms
- 2 Tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 2 Tablespoons fresh thyme
- 3 cups water
- Salt to taste
- Grated Parmesan cheese

### Directions:

Toast 1 cup barley in saucepan with 1 T. butter until it starts to brown. Add 3 cups water, loosely cover and bring to a boil, then reduce to simmer.

While barley is simmering, slice 1 pound button mushrooms. Sauté in 1 T. butter and dash of salt until mushrooms give up their water and begin to brown. Add 2 T. chopped onion and sauté for 2 more minutes.

After all liquid is absorbed, stir mushrooms into saucepan with barley. Add 2 T. fresh thyme. Serve immediately as a side or main dish. Delicious with grated Parmesan.

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### Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Kloner © 2014

Hear that in the hallway?  
It's his voice and HERS!!!!

Yaaaaay! I love all the  
strange new cat smells  
she brings in!

Cat company is the best! First I'm gonna confront her at the door with a petulant meow, then I'm gonna jump in her lap and start rubbing against her until she pets me AND I shed a bunch of fur on her. Take that, strange cat!

You're too bold. When she removes her shoes I discreetly sneak up and head-but them while sniffing out her cat. Cats always rub there!

When she's done petting me, I'm going straight for a nap on her coat. I love all those wonderful aromas. Her cat communicates with us through her clothes.

Don't you think she might be a bit put off by the way you sprawl around her coat like it's your personal blankie?

No way. A cat person knows that my olfactory intelligence mission also involves marking her coat as a message back. She still pets me later and accepts me for who I am.

I love cat company!

CAT COMPANY: All the fun of a new cat with none of the ugly hissing and fighting.